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SUBJECT: JANUARY 31 MFA PRESS BRIEFING: TAINTED DUMPLINGS,
DPRK, SUDAN, CHEN SHUI-BIAN VISIT TO SPRATLEYS, FINANCIAL
NEWS SERVICES

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11. Key points at the regular January 24 MFA press briefing:

-- China is taking a "responsible attitude" regarding tainted dumplings that were exported to Japan, and Chinese authorities have issued a recall to distributors of the dumplings.

-- The spokesperson could not confirm that EAP/K Director Sung Kim had met his Chinese counterparts during Kim's stopover in Beijing, but said that the United States and China have ongoing consultations on the DPRK.

-- The head of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee's International Department met with Kim Jong-Il during his recent trip to the DPRK and reported that Kim had said that current "problems" with the declaration are temporary and can be overcome.

-- The spokesperson declined to comment specifically on reports that Chen Shui-bian plans to travel to the Spratly Islands for military activities, but stressed China's "indisputable sovereignty" over the islands and ability to protect this sovereignty.

-- Foreign financial news services have no expressed no complaints about operating in China.

-- In a meeting with Sudan's Foreign Minister, China urged Sudan to "push ahead with the peace process," but had not received complaints from the United States urging them to do so.

Tainted Dumplings

12. At the regularly-scheduled MFA press briefing January 31, MFA Spokesperson Liu Jianchao said China is taking a "responsible attitude" regarding pesticide-tainted dumplings that were exported to Japan. He said the government has sent an inspection team to the plant where the dumplings were produced and has requested that distributors recall the product. He said a preliminary investigation of samples of the dumplings in question did not indicate contamination, but that the investigation would continue.

13. Liu emphasized that China is cooperating with the Japanese authorities on the matter, and that the Chinese Administration for Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (ASQIQ) would provide additional information to

the public later on January 31. Liu noted that the government's investigation is ongoing and the Japanese government had not made a formal protest.

DPRK

¶4. Asked if EAP/K Director Sung Kim had met his Chinese counterparts during his stopover in Beijing, Liu said that he did not have specific information on whether meetings had taken place, but noted that they had been scheduled. He said that the United States and China have ongoing consultations on the DPRK through the Six-Party process and that China is interested in continuing communication with the U.S. on the DPRK.

¶5. Liu confirmed that Wang Jiarui, head of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee's International Department, met Kim Jong-Il during Wang's recent trip to the DPRK. He confirmed reports that Kim told Wang that current "problems" with the DPRK nuclear declaration are temporary and can be overcome.

Chen Shui-bian Visit to Spratly Island

¶6. Liu was asked about reports in the Taiwan media that Chen Shui-bian plans to head a team visiting Taiping Island, part of the Spratly Islands, for military activities. Liu stressed that China has "indisputable sovereignty" over the Spratly Islands, adding that China has the ability to protect this sovereignty. He added that China wants to work toward peace and stability in the South China Sea. Liu declined to comment on a follow-up question that sought clarification on whether Beijing found acceptable a visit by a leader from Taiwan, which China also claims is part of Chinese territory, to the islands.

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Regulations Regarding Providers of Financial Information

¶7. A reporter sought comment on statements from U.S. officials that the U.S. will increase pressure on China to lift restrictions on providers of financial information, including the possibility of the U.S. seeking action in the WTO. Liu noted that there had been conflicting press reports on the issue. He stressed that the government has been talking to foreign news agencies on the release of financial news in China and that they had received no complaints from the agencies, indicating that there are no problems.

Sudan

¶8. Liu was asked about Chinese Special Envoy for Darfur Liu Guijin's meetings with Sudan's Foreign Minister on the margins of the African Union Summit, in which Liu reportedly cautioned Sudan to avoid actions that would lead the international community to impose sanctions, and said that the world was running out of patience on the Darfur issue. The spokesperson said China urged the government in Sudan to "push ahead with the peace process" to restore stability, adding that China will continue to exchange views with Sudan and consult with the international community. Liu added that China had not received complaints from the United States asking them intervene.

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